

A Place Worth Writing About:

Narrative Essay Overview

One of the goals of The Writer's Journey is to have you take an **essay of a more personal and reflective nature through the drafting and revision process**. Ultimately, this is a piece you will read out loud at our read-around celebration during the final day of our class.

To help frame your piece, and reinforce the theme of journey-taking, you will **write a narrative reflecting on the importance of Place in your life**. Often, we don't realize the impact Place has on our lives. Where we come from, places we like to visit, landscapes we see all leave an imprint on our personalities and spirits. This essay will explore those connections.

Think of this piece as a **short memoir, a slice of your life focusing on a particular aspect** (in this case, the idea of Place). It will mostly focus on **narrative elements** – plot, conflict, characters, a resolution – but it also could have brief **expository elements**, parts where you're informing, presenting facts, etc. The writing focus, though, is solidly on telling a story.

You will be provided samples to help you see the possibilities.

Categories of Place:

Region. It's no secret that values, norms, customs, and perspectives are shaped by the area we grow up and live in. Think about the region you grew up in. (This could be the town or city or general region of the USA.) What values did you learn? How were you shaped by where you grew up? Did you feel a part of the common culture? Who/What do you think you'd become if you were to live in a different region?

Structures. There are buildings or structures we visit to find peace, solace, and inspiration. It could be a business, a treehouse, a barn, your own home, or a church. Conversely, these places also can be associated with pain and judgment. Explore the way structures have shaped and influenced who you are. Make a list of important structures and three associations to each. Choose one structure and develop it.

Landscape. The geography and landscape that surrounds us influences us in profound ways. Folks who grow up on farms can feel most at home with open spaces. Others find hills and mountains reflective of who they are. Still others, bodies of water. Perhaps even deserts. Write about the landscape you grew up

with. Explore how it has shaped you and made you feel. Then write about a different landscape you've visited and the differences between the two. How did that new landscape impact you? Is there a landscape that feels like home?

Home. Home can be defined many ways. It could be the house you grew up in, the woods, a stream, a school, or a place in your mind. The list could go on. Generate a list of places you've felt at home and write one or two, and what qualities made this place feel like home. What is your definition of home? How does this place fit that?

Helpful Hints:

- When you reflect, you **look back** upon an event and remember not only the sequence of events, but the **stories and lessons learned** from those experiences.
- Some **questions to ponder**: What experiences of Place did you learn the most from? What were some unexpected discoveries? What fears did you conquer, or help others conquer? What opened your eyes in a way they haven't been opened before?
- Sensory details and descriptive writing is key.
- Aim for a length of 750-1500 words – anything less is too short and anything more is too unwieldy for our purposes.
- Follow MLA format.